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and eagles whom he invites to devour it. In so doing, he does not address them by their usual names, but calls Wolf, *Ałtsa-i-gamum*, "The Devourer of Meat Which He Does Not Kill," that is, "The Biting Scavenger"; and Eagle, *Axaikaiyai-maemum*, "The Constant Eater," that is, "The One Who Eats before He Is Hungry." Next morning the flesh has been devoured and the hunter believes his guests have eaten it. Animals and birds, being supernatural, can hear the words of mortals and read their thoughts. The significance of these actions is that animals have the power to conceal themselves, so a hunter must gain their favour before he can hope to succeed. Belief in the efficacy of such customs as these is rapidly falling into decay and bear meat is now often eaten, but the skull is carefully placed in an evergreen tree near where the animal is slain, so that it may come back to life.

Fish, likewise, are immortal. In autumn the streams are choked with dead and dying salmon, but the Bella Coola know that they are not really dead, they have merely shed their worthless blankets in accordance with *Alquntăm*'s decrees. At that season of the year he causes the rivers to rise so that they will sweep away these useless and outworn cloaks.

Although the salmon, from the kindness of their hearts, allow human beings to feast on their blankets, yet they have certain likes and dislikes which are carefully observed. From the time the first spring salmon appear (I, pp. 759-761) until the rising of the July moon, women are not allowed to eat them or to go near the river. Men may eat the flesh, but instead of throwing the bones to dogs, they carefully return them to the river saying:

"Please come back tomorrow."

If this is inconvenient, bones can be thrown into the woods with impunity.

Salmon, like men and animals, live a human-like existence in their homes far beneath the surface of the ocean. They lack and desire earthly objects, especially pounded cedar-bark (see Appendix A) to use as sponges for their children, so the Bella Coola throw pieces of it and eagle down on the water.

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593 family are liable. It is very rare for a woman to be killed in
627 a blood feud. A death is answered by a death; if two persons
682 should be slain for one murder the family which has suffered
the double loss endeavours to kill another of their enemies. In
562 case of wounding, an effort is made to wound the offender, but
689 if he should be killed his family would try to avenge him.
More often, one of the offender's family takes the initiative of
offering goods to the injured family, "to cure the wound." If
the offer is accepted, and the goods delivered properly, the
matter is at an end. If a murder be committed within the
ranks of the immediate family, for instance, if a brother kill
a brother, revenge, if exacted, must be meted out to the actual
522 offender. If requested to do so, the leading chief of a village
may offer his advice, but it is always considered that revenge
concerns only the immediate family.

612 Revenge is a topic which shows clearly the essential fluidity
614 of the family. There are no well-defined degrees of relation-
627 ship within which responsibility rests. Instead, everyone
682 knows, in the open life of the community, how many persons
share the family life of the individual, and they alone are held
to account, or they alone demand compensation. From its
very nature, the family must be a bilateral unit which, when
powerful, stretches out to absorb members of the ancestral
families of both mother and father.

Not only does the family thus appear constantly to be
attracting to itself members of the ancestral family of either
parent, but these relatives themselves are deeply interested in
the affairs of the family. This is most clearly shown in the
case of children who, of course, are members of the ancestral
family of both their mother and father. A few days after
559 birth some relative is expected to call together the people of
612 the village where the child is born for the bestowal and valida-
614 tion of an ancestral name. It is considered an evidence of
poverty if this is done by the father, as if his child were only
551 supported by his parents, not by a larger circle of relatives.
It is immaterial whether this gathering be called by a relative

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the food and goods distributed, since it was winter and the people were in dire straits on account of the destruction of all their stores. In consequence, the uncle decided to make a new name for his nephew, *Hámut*, "Charred Wood." By virtue of the goods expended this name became an honourable title, and was maintained by lavish presents. Any similar incident connected with a potlatch can be made the origin of a designation. Another example of a manufactured name is one derived from a peculiarity of the man giving the potlatch. A number of years ago a chief was jeered at by his associates on account of the frequency with which he had to visit the toilet. When next he gave a potlatch he created the name *Ilpúla*, "The Toilet One," and gave great dignity to the designation by presents.

Since a seat is valuable only on account of the goods expended in obtaining it with respect to a certain name, it is obvious that names and seats are closely associated. A man who wishes his son to succeed to his own location in the house seats the youth, as has been described, at his feet. It may be a matter of years before he actually takes his father's position, but during that time he is treated with respect; he is still a commoner, but it is recognized that his parent considers him likely to "make good" and become a true chief by ability to give presents. Should he fail to do so, inexorably his influence wanes, in spite of his name and duly validated seat. He keeps the latter, but it is no longer considered one of importance. Thus, too, the course of names from generation to generation is a series of curves; sometimes one is on a pinnacle of glory when "made strong" by a powerful chief, but in the next generation it may fall to the dust through unworthiness by a weakling. As the Bella Coola express it: It has become homogeneticized.

A woman is rarely established in a seat, and usually only when a chief has no sons or other near male descendants. In such a case she receives an ancestral name and has the same status as a male chief. At the present time one important

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554 chief had thus obtained a seat for his daughter, as well as ones
• 556 for his two sons. But usually a woman continues to use the
• 562 ancestral name given to her in infancy until she is able to
assist her husband in a potlatch, when a name is validated for
[553] her (see I, p. 410). The ancestral names of the first women
to occupy this earth are reserved for women and, like men's
names, vary in prestige according to the prowess of their
owners. Most names given to children, though embodied in
[551] origin myths, are applicable to either sex; and these are the
common designations of women. Cases are known in which a
woman has assumed an ancestral name if her brother has al-
lowed it to fall into ill-repute through failure to give potlatches.

554 With such a fluid system, no fixed line can be drawn be-
• 556 tween chief and commoner. But after his fourth potlatch a
622 man's influence in the community has become so great that
[359] he will usually feel justified in having the carpenters make for
him a material seat. There is nothing to prevent a person
having one made for him before he has given the requisite
number of potlatches, but too rapid assumption may render
him liable to the scorn of the community through his failure
to show himself sufficiently "strong." The contempt shown
[24] to anyone attempting to usurp too lofty a place is a strong
deterrent to a proud young man.

[532] On the material seat are carved the man's ancestral crests,
[352] in other words the forms in which his first ancestors came to
earth, or some of the beings with whom they came in con-
tact. To show these is a matter of pride, but unless the dis-
play is fittingly validated, the man's own dignity will be
lowered, as well as that of his ancestors. Construction of a
seat is particularly common when a man is establishing himself
in the central position behind the fire, and claims this to be
where his first ancestor sat. Others among the first people
may have chosen seats in other parts of the house, and in these,
likewise, a man who is taking his ancestral name may have a
material seat constructed. Establishment in such a position
increases a chief's feeling of mental superiority, as if strength-

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lieved that all the Kitkatla chiefs were powerful, but *Tsdsis* was the greatest of all. It is said that one of his prerogatives[1] was to exercise *jus primae noctis* whenever a Kitkatla was married. Without question, tales of this chief's prowess have become exaggerated in transmission, none the less they show that the Bella Coola realize the great importance of the northern chiefs. Concerning their nearer neighbours, the Bella Bella, the Bella Coola understand the way in which the members of a family combine to help their chief in the giving of presents. They say that the Bella Bella consider the Bella Coola practice of each one endeavouring to make himself a chief to be foolish in the extreme. Such is also said to be the opinion among the Kwakiutl, who support their contention that in Bella Coola all are chiefs, from the fact that flooring exists under the seats of all, whereas in Fort Rupert, their home, such occurs only beneath the seats of chiefs.

Corresponding to the extreme paucity of functions possessed by Bella Coola chiefs, their prerogatives are likewise scanty. Indeed, they take their validated seats only during certain rites of the secret society connected with chiefs, at potlatches, and at ceremonial meals. These last occur whenever a deer or seal is killed; the latter is considered a great delicacy.[2] Anyone can kill a seal, but it would be unthinkable for a Bella Coola to share its flesh with his immediate family only. The animal is cleaned, the hole made by bullet or spear carefully plugged, and the carcass boiled whole in a large box. Meanwhile a herald (I, p. 244) summons the chiefs to the house where the successful hunter lives. If the meal is to consist merely of one small seal, only a few chiefs are invited, those of greatest influence through their possession of "strong" seats. When several seals have been killed, the number invited is correspondingly larger, but no woman may partake unless she ranks

[1] This is said to have been a personal prerogative, not shared by all chiefs, and requiring validation by valuable presents.

[2] Only traces of the rite described in this paragraph occur at the present time. In fact, the reservation of seal meat for chiefs alone was discontinued towards the close of the last century.

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as a man by the duly validated ownership of a chief's name in his own right. Formerly a slave was never allowed to eat seal, unless he had been the slayer. If many seals are killed, chiefs from adjacent villages are sometimes invited. The chiefs seat themselves according to their proper positions and are first served with the blood-stained grease that floats to the top of the water as the meat is boiling. When cooked, the meat is cut into strips, measured in terms of so many finger breadths, according to the number of guests. The cuts run down each fore-flipper, so that each receives a narrow strip including one of the toes. The head is always given to the herald.[1]

Wealthy chiefs frequently invite their fellows to ordinary meals even when no seal or deer has been killed. On these occasions, as at seal feasts, the guests are designated by their ancestral names, not by those in general use.

Chiefs are also accustomed to meet for the discussion of matters connected with the winter ceremonial; on such occasions their number may be augmented by men of influence in the secret society, though they do not rank as chiefs. Such a meeting is always called when a new member is to be initiated into the *hasisi* society. If there is difference of opinion the influence of even a *nanâk* chief is outweighed by a man of importance in the society. The matter is discussed by all present and a decision reached by general agreement. It is difficult for a white man to understand how such is possible without either a vote, or general recognition by all that the views of some individual must be accepted. The writer was present at one such meeting, and was struck by the manner in which, after considerable, and at times heated, discussion, a consensus of opinion was reached, and accepted even by those who had proposed a contrary course.

Near every village is a place where the chiefs hold such meetings. All the inhabitants know the general locality, but

[1] Every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of this account, but errors may have crept in on account of the length of time which has elapsed since the ceremony was carried out in full detail.

unstratified. Boys and girls helped their parents, and there was no definite age at which they ceased to do so. The fluidity of the Bella Coola system was contrary to any stratification. The more important a chief became, the more did he receive from dependent relatives, but the more did they expect in the way of "return presents." It was advantageous to be generous, within the family circle as well as without, since life was so public that every transaction even of a "private" nature, was well known. Unquestionably, a greedy and strong-minded individual must frequently have taken advantage of help from his housemates, but there was no strict code of ethics in regard to this. In brief, it may be said that the acquisition of wealth was an unstandardized, individual, matter; its distribution was likewise according to individual volition, although within a rigidly defined tribal pattern.

Sacred Names

The ancestral names that chiefs desire to raise to a position of eminence are usually embodied in myths dealing with the first settlement of this earth, names which belong, as has been stated, to the ancestral family. Many of these traditions record other designations as well, each of which carries with it the prerogative of performing a type of dance known as *nusuit*. These will be spoken of, henceforth, as *nusuit* names. The Bella Coola do not know the meaning of this term. These names, like ancestral ones, are the potential property of members of the ancestral family, but can only be assumed when duly validated by presents. Such an assumption follows a period of seclusion in the back room of the house. Both men and women are eligible. A person may be secluded in this way a number of times, acquiring a new *nusuit* name on each occasion, but as presents must be distributed every time, it follows that only the children or relatives of wealthy chiefs can be so favoured. It is desirable to have the bestowal of a *nusuit* name occur at a potlatch, since guests from foreign tribes are then

without special gloss, X calls upon some eloquent friend to direct the distribution of the money. This speaker points how X is carrying out the sixth incumbent on his noble and exalted station, how all honour him for so doing, and how all should strive to follow his example. He then says that to give strength to the name *Snaymaxila*, for example, X will give sixty, say four. He further announces who have contributed the amount: perhaps [illegible] from X, and the other half from various relations of Y. If the sum in question be large it is always mentioned from whom, and how the donor has obtained the money. Thus every financial transaction becomes publicly known, and the more prominently a man figures, the greater is his prestige. Next, the amount to be used for the second recipient's name is announced, with the same details, and in like fashion the sums decided upon for each successive initiate.

Thus the total amount is distributed among the guests by the heralds, under X's supervision. He usually gives everyone the same amount; men sometimes receive more than women, but in every case members of the same sex receive an equal sum. The Bella Coola are not expert mathematicians, so that faulty division is the rule. If X., for example, decides to give [illegible] to each person present, it is a time of considerable anxiety while the stack of bills is being reduced, to watch whether or not there will be the exact amount. If X finds out he is short he will hastily borrow some money, as it would be an insult to omit anyone. If the amount be too great, he will use the surplus in making presents to the more influential guests.

With the exception of this possible surplus, the money distributed is regarded as an outright present; "it has flowed away to make good the boys' names" is the Bella Coola expression. A chief will remember how much he has received, and if he wishes to uphold or to increase his own dignity, he will make a point of returning at least an equivalent to X on some future occasion. But though in effect he may make return, such is never said to be the case. "The money has flowed away."

to a complicated figure such as a whale, and in that case an expert dancer among the guests is called upon to perform. It is announced that this is, "to make clean the road for the dead."

After such masked figure has disappeared, the sound of whistling from without grows gradually weaker, as the apparition returns whence it came. In silence almost X takes a copper[1] which he has had in readiness, breaks it across his knee,[2] and throws it either into the fire or down on the ground in the track that the figure has taken. Then the announcer calls out loudly:

"It is for his sake.[3] It has 'made bare for the dead.'[4] Thus he continues, speaking for X and using the first person:

"My heart is glad at seeing my father.[5] At death he returned back on the path of my family's ancestors and donned our ancient crest. He now lives in *Nuxalk-a*, whence he came to visit us and whither he has now gone back."

The significance of the throwing down of a copper is entirely unknown to the modern Bella Coola, although they still perform the ritual. In some vague way it is felt that "bone," which may imply *stability*, has been provided for the deceased. The act thus appears in the light of an offering to the dead, but this sentiment is not clearly appreciated by the participants in the rite, the presence has been made for, rather than to, the one being mourned.

The copper, now valueless, is picked up by any child and *given to a poor man.*

After a short interval a number of youths begin to distribute presents provided by X, which have been placed in readiness. Gifts of equal value are given to all foreign male guests, while the women receive ones less valuable. These presents

[1] One of the glories of native copper, such as were formerly known and sold and used as tokens of value by the coast tribes of British Columbia. These coppers worn by the Bella Coola will be described later in greater detail (L. p. 335).

[2] The breaking is sometimes omitted.

[3] That is, "For the dead man, now in form of his crest."

[4] The reference relates the deceased may have been.

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a man, *a'wunsa*, with the prerogative of enforcing obedience to river taboos. Ever since, the owner of this name, when it has been duly legalized, has had the right to perform this function. In some cases, such as carpenters and singers, the validation of a prerogative has not brought with it the necessary ability, so that the incumbent remains a properly ratified, but non-functioning, craftsman. No mechanical skill is required by a River Guardian, hence the owner of the name *a'wunsa* has always been able to perform his duties. 424 463 551 693 [793]

From time immemorial certain restrictions have been enforced concerning the river: No refuse may be thrown in, otherwise the olachen would remain in the ocean. For the same reason, women at certain periods are not allowed to bathe lest a speck of blood should blind the fish and prevent them from coming to the river. Occasionally an olachen with red eyes is caught; this is caused by some heedless woman. When the fish are running in the river, women are not allowed on the bank, nor to repair the nets. At high tide, it is forbidden to drive stakes for olachen nets. 784 825 226 [515] 841 [562]

The number of prohibitions increases during the critical period of the salmon run. Then no freshly hewn planks can be set afloat, and even a canoe which has just been completed must be kept for ten days before launching. No one whose husband or wife has died within the last year can embark at the village, but must proceed to a landing-place at the head of the lake. Most important of all, refuse of salmon must be deposited in the woods; if thrown into the river, the fish would smell it and avoid the stream. Even accidents such as the upsetting of a canoe, or the spilling of olachen grease, are considered to be offences. [502] [765]

Disregard of any of these injunctions is displeasing to the salmon and it is the duty of the River Guardian to punish the offender, irrespective of his rank. In case of slight infringements, he beats the guilty person or throws him into the river. The guilty person usually scrambles out, but should he be swept away and drowned, no recompense can be claimed by 688 693

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quit. Details of this prerogative were not obtainable, but it seems to follow the general type.

THE PROFESSION OF FIRST BERRY PICKER

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All women can pick berries, but in every village there is at least one who has the prerogative of picking the first of every kind. The origin of this right is lost in dim antiquity, but, like all others, each first berry picker has a special professional name embodied in her ancestral myth which must be duly validated before she can function. One of these is *Sîtowaxwê-nimde-s*, another is *Ła'ya*. Though normally reserved for women, one of these names is occasionally given to a male child, in which case it is said to have been hermaphroditized. No one would dare to pick berries until the legal picker has paraded up and down the sidewalk carrying on her back her picking basket decorated with a representation of the sun, an act which is believed to ripen the berries.

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[789]

"Get ready to pick red elderberries [or whatever species is ripe] tomorrow," she keeps calling out.

The berries may then be picked by anyone. This is repeated for every variety. As far as could be learned, there was no social mechanism to punish a woman who picked berries before the announcement of the official picker; obedience seems to have been so universal that infractions are said to have been unknown though formerly there may have been some penalty of which even the memory has disappeared.

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THE PROFESSION OF WARRIOR

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The profession of warrior is another prerogative handed down from the distant past and requiring validation before it can be used. As with other rights of this type, magical means are in many cases employed to make any young man brave and successful, but there are a number of warriors confirmed as such by the distribution of presents at the time of bestowal on them of professional names. At the present time, it is

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(5) They govern Y's status in this world. When women quarrel, as they often do, the most common boast to shame a less wealthy rival is a reminder of the number of times the speaker was repurchased and the value of the goods used. 556 583 [578]

"I can sit down on fifteen canoes," or "I am carried by five slaves," says the angry woman, mentioning whatever goods were used for her repurchase.

(6) Finally, these goods serve a more definite purpose in obtaining for Y a name, or names, of which the value is directly proportionate to the expenditure, precisely as the importance of a chief's designation depends on the goods used to validate it. [553]

As with men's names, some women's appellations were given by *Alpuuiim* to the first arrivals; others were created on this earth with regard to peculiar events, and still others are names which can be used either by men or women. Theoretically, the dignity of the first type of name is greater than either of the others, but in practice the importance of the owner depends on the number of times she has bought herself from her husband; the principles governing the rank of women are thus the same as those already described for men. The term *yuwal*, applied to a woman who has many times ransomed herself and so reached a position of eminence, is the feminine equivalent to *sitkmay*. The creation of women's names in reference to personal characteristics or incidents connected with their married life is more common than similar creations for men. The ritual of the bestowal of a name on Y, here given, was omitted from the description of the potlatch in order to lessen the complexity of that ceremony. It will be remembered that on the afternoon of the second day of the potlatch Y's relatives appear outside X's house, carrying valuable presents. 551 556 583 [554] [562] 553 556 573

The announcer calls out that Y's father has come to give "food" to X and his relatives. By food, presents are meant, which are the return, with interest, of the gifts given by X's relatives on various occasions. The giver is announced, for other relatives than Y's father contribute, and to whom the

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552 969 messengers may be marked with the same ritual as at a potlatch, but there is always curtailment of feast features if rites of that nature are to be omitted.

424 556 969 [967] Meanwhile other preparations have not been neglected. Among the prerogatives embodied in many origin myths, is that of the presence of professional mourners at memorial potlatches. If mention of these is made in the ancient tradition of the donor's ancestral family, it is a matter of pride for him to do as was done by his ancestors in the distant past. For example, it may be recorded that at the memorial potlatch of some ancient chief, a number of his younger relatives appeared with red paint smeared upon their faces, with finely chopped undyed cedar-bark in the hair, or with bands of the same material across their heads. *Alpoxiow* had decreed that they should thus exhibit their grief, and the descendants of the chief have since had the privilege of doing likewise. Such signs of mourning may not, however, be worn without proper validation. It is only the members of the ancestral family who are entitled to don these marks, and among them, only those whose right has been confirmed by the distribution of presents. This is a masculine professional prerogative, known by the same name as the feminine one of uttering a droning cry to which it is closely akin. The right is entitled at memorial potlatches, and the donor of one is glad to do so as a means of displaying his own wealth as well as of making plain the glory of his ancestors to whom the one being commemorated has returned. There is no mention of professional mourners in the myths of many families, nor are they ever as important in Bella Coola as among the Bella Bella and other tribes of the outer coast. If such belong to the family of the donor, he notifies the incumbents and asks them to be ready, although, eager to act, they seldom wait for such an invitation.

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533 554 969 The most difficult task is the preparation of mourning songs at which the singers toil for several weeks. The donor first invites them to his house and recounts the myths from which they must be composed. These may include several traditions

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phases of activity, leaving here only certain rules about diet and a number of prohibitions which hunters must observe.

FOOD TABOOS OBSERVED BY WOMEN

Women must not eat bear meat. To do so would derange the catamenia and cause profuse growth of hair.

Women of child-bearing age must not eat beaver. To do so would cause a difficult delivery.

A woman of child-bearing age must not eat toasted salmon until the sticks have been removed which hold it in front of the fire. She will bear twins if this injunction is disregarded.

TABOOS OBSERVED BY HUNTERS

No hunter or fisherman may leave the village in the morning if he has been foolish enough to break the night's fast. It is customary to depart at dawn and take a small meal when nearing the hunting or fishing-ground.

No hunter may drink water in which dog salmon have been soaked. Animals dislike this liquid and avoid a man with it in his stomach.

When traps have been set, and a party of hunters is sitting around the camp-fire in the evening, no one must pass between it and one of his fellows. If this should be done, heedlessly, animals would disregard the bait that has been set out.

When mountain goat hunters are travelling, the most expert must lead the party. When he sits down, so must the others, and no one can change places with him. This is said to be a *custom of the Carriers as well as of the Bella Coola.*

When a hunter is cutting up a bear, he must be careful not to cut a vein which is said to run across the chest and down each fore-paw. To do so causes sickness.

When a hunter kills a bear, he must place either the skull or the whole head with two rods at the scene of the kill, otherwise he will become blind. In some families, the man removes only an eye, places it in a notched stick and sets this under an over-

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since each fisherman provided one when his box was filled. 226

No one is allowed to drink water immediately after eating the first olachen of the spring, since to do so would cause a flood. It is considered most improper for a child to cry soon after partaking of this food; if he does so, he is quieted by having nettles stuffed into his mouth. As already described, if a person dies before the first fish have passed through his bowels, a shaman must wipe his lips with cedar-bark. 796 574 [865]

After the first meal of olachen, rakes for the nets can be driven, and the restrictions become less exacting. Women are not allowed to assist in fishing, but the men devote their full time to the task, working with zest and energy.[1] An abundant supply of olachen is a source of joy, and all listen eagerly for the singing of the thrush, *cmo-o-o-o-o-o*, which signifies that the nets are full to bursting. Half jocularly, people invite the bird to come and eat, but his melody is interpreted as: 226 [562] [825]

"I shall eat when the river is full."

RITES CONNECTED WITH THE FIRST SPRING SALMON[2]

Salmon is the most important article of Bella Coola diet and the rites which accompany the earliest taking of the fish are relatively complicated. 226 796 [262]

When the first spring salmon have been caught, they are laid in the canoe with their heads all pointing eastward, upstream. The fisherman poles to shore, but instead of landing his catch, he fastens the salmon to a stake driven at the edge of the bank so that they remain in the water. A number of posts are usually placed in readiness, each decorated with alternate spirals of dyed and undyed cedar-bark and crowned with an eagle's tail. Each day one or two more fish may be caught, but all are left in the water until the first have become soft, thus giving sufficient time for the necessary preparations on shore. It is the duty of every owner of a salmon-weir to build near its end a so-called Spring Salmon House, a shed-like [343]

[1] For a description of olachen fishing, see Appendix A.
[2] See, p. 76.

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women listening from the village are able to tell how many have been caught from the number of times the cry *xaĺ'laĺ* is raised. 226 796

Then the salmon are cut up (only shell knives may be used for the purpose) and cooked. Everything must be used, heads, bones, and entrails, the only refuse being the blood which is scraped from the leaves and carried into the woods. The leaves themselves, and the strings of dyed and undyed cedar-bark are thrown into the river in accordance with a desire expressed by *Nuĺkymm* long ago. When everything is ready for a meal, the men take their places in two rows, facing each other across a coarse bark mat. Bark spoons have been provided, and when the heralds call for food, the fisherman brings the heads of the salmon and the guests make the motions of eating, though in reality these parts are dried and kept for winter. Boxes containing a liberal portion of the choice meat are next served and all eat freely. Each guest puts on one side what he has not consumed as if to carry it away, as is the custom at an ordinary feast, though his share is really left in the shelter until the following day. Finally, a third course is provided, the back of the fish cooked with the bone in position. Like the last, the guests eat as much as they desire and pack up the residue as if to take away. Then they leave the Spring Salmon House. [412] 226 796 574 [251]

All the fish are not cooked on the one occasion. The following day the fisherman again calls back the men of his village. The same type of meal is served, but this time the guests carry away what they do not eat for the benefit of their families. This portion may be eaten by the women without *offending the salmon.* [562]

This rite has not been performed in full detail in Bella Coola for many years, and it was impossible to collect information on some points. It is uncertain, for example, whether this ceremony was carried out by every fisherman or whether there used to be certain individuals with the prerogative of dealing with the first catch. The latter appears to be the most logical 226 796 424

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manner, and was definitely stated to be the case by one well-informed old man. It is clear, however, that every spring salmon was landed with the cry of *xal'lai*, taken to the Spring Salmon House, and cut up by the men until the time when women were allowed near the river. Another old man stated that the feast took place at night and that only the heads and refuse of the first catch were eaten, the remainder being dried for the winter. Women of child-bearing age were not allowed on the river bank, and were rigorously excluded from the Spring Salmon House until the time when the sun's shadow reached a diagonal scar on the slope of one of the mountains on the north side of North Bentinck Arm. This occurs about August. From that time onwards, there was no calling of *xal'lai*, and women, except those who were taboo, could cut salmon freely on the bank. It was even stated that refuse of salmon could be thrown into the river after that time. No one knows the origin of this seasonal prohibition, or why it should end when the sun reaches a certain point, but it was faithfully observed in former times.

In Kimsquit similar rites were carried out, the chief variation being that the bodies of four swans were placed in the Spring Salmon House and the fish laid with these at intervals in the line. Moreover, the youth used to bite the back of each salmon so he presented it with the cedar-bark streamer. The same regulations with regard to drinking water, and crying after eating, were enforced for spring salmon as for chinook.

Miscellaneous Beliefs

The following miscellaneous beliefs and customs cannot be assigned to any special aspect of Bella Coola life:

If a spark from a fire jumps out and lights on a person's hand, it is said:

"The fire wants to give you [the person on whom the brand has fallen] food."

If a man sneezes repeatedly, it is said:

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[The Dance of Noukxnim]

arms being brought into play, so that the whole hands are constantly quivering without spasmodic movements. Ability to do this is one of the marks of a skilful performer, and the incessant shaking is continued without stop throughout the dance. Most *kusiut* songs are in five parts, which may be described as three verses, separated by two choruses. Near the beginning of the first verse X stands up, raises his arms, shakes his fingers, then slightly bends his legs and begins to step in time to the beating of the sticks. Some dancers remain almost stationary, marking time, to use the military term, others advance in steps of an inch or so, at intervals slowly revolving sunwise.[1] Sometimes X introduces a variation by bending from side to side, in which case one hand rises above the other. If the time of the song is very slow, he sinks, bending his knees to a great extent, and advances in more lengthy strides, never ceasing to shake his hands. At each chorus the time becomes so rapid that it is impossible to move the feet in accordance with it, and then X crouches, his shaking hands the only movement. If it is a woman who is dancing—like most *kusiut* prerogatives, this one is not limited to men—the style of dancing is quite different. Keeping the upper part of each arm close to her body, the dancer extends her fore-arms, outwards, parallel to the ground, with the palms upwards. Like a man, she shakes her wrists, but few female dancers move from the spot on which they start, except perhaps to turn around, sunwise. Husbands always keep up a running fire of comments, especially when a woman is dancing, urging her not to be bashful, but to allow her breasts to shake. Some dancers have merged into one prerogative rights acquired from different coastal tribes. In such cases they perform in two or more styles, each part according to one prerogative.

Kukuelut are always ready to assist one of their fellows, so that three or four friends are always willing to accompany the dancer. They stand close behind him, at frequent intervals blowing over his head the eagle down which either X, or some

[1] The Bella Coola state that the Bella Bella perform counter-sunwise.

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This ejaculation is supposed to make the work of manufacture less difficult. The same procedure is repeated with every mask ordered, except that if the being to be represented is a woman, X's ejaculation is *i* ..... *Any Dancer* can make a mask, but the preference is always given to a man who has shown ability in previous tasks. The carpenters endeavour to follow well-recognized designs for many representations, but a great deal of latitude is allowed, and a workman receives greater praise and fame for turning out a fine and distinctive piece of new design, than for rigid adherence to a former type. This, combined with the burning of masks and consequent loss of permanent patterns, is responsible for the variability in Bella Coola forms, and the difficulty which they themselves experience in recognizing portrayed beings.

As soon as all the carpentry has been allotted, the singers strike up one of X's eight songs. Whether or not he dances to them is a matter about which there is a difference of opinion among informants. In any case the re-singing on successive days is purely for rehearsal, made necessary by the large number of songs. Later on in the *Initiat* season, the songs of other dancers may be practised on this night, and if the owners wish to practise their steps, it is quite proper for them to do so. Finally, a meal is distributed, while the masked dancers in the usual way. Pieces are fragments of all *Initiat* dances, and the food distributed is regarded as a free-will gift, without thought of repayment. After eating, the *Initiat* disperses; X must sleep within his own house, but no longer remains within his platform-enclosure.

The next day, the twenty-sixth of the ceremony, is quiet. Early in the morning a herald summons to X's house, where the blocks have been left, all those to whom work has been assigned. All morning they carve diligently. The speed with which masks are completed is surprising, although this has undoubtedly increased since the introduction of metal tools. In the middle of the day a few *Initiat* men, no women, are invited to share "the carpenters' meal," as the food provided

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by X is called. Having dined, the guests depart while the craftsmen continue their labours. Towards dusk the house is cleared up, the chips thrown on the fire and everything made ready. On this night the uninitiated are invited, but there is a wide and important difference in ritual between Bella Coola and Kimsquit. In the former the masks are carefully concealed, whereas in Kimsquit one or two, or sometimes all, are suspended behind the fire by the carpenters. It is exceedingly difficult for an observer to understand why this practice does not at once remove all secrecy from the rite. The explanation appears to lie in the fact that the uninitiated, ignorant of how they have been made, see in these strange objects evidence of the power of the initiated. In Kimsquit, moreover, members of the society emphasize the fact that the dancers are supernaturally endowed representations of what the beings above are doing and performing, and it is only at certain rites that they are actually supposed to be present. One old Bella Coola remembered having heard from his grandfather that long before his time the carpenters used to make the masks in their own houses where the uninitiated could see them; the dancer would come in, wave his arm over the craftsman's head and cry *hoip* if the workmanship was excellent. The man who described this experiment his own scepticism, and added that it would have destroyed the key-note of secrecy. A possible explanation of this important difference in ritual will be given at the end of this chapter; for the present it will be enough to point out that the masks are left suspended in Kimsquit, and concealed in Bella Coola.

Towards dusk the herald goes to every house to summon the initiated, who have adorned themselves for the ceremony by washing and painting, as the uninitiated have also done. The members assemble slowly, in fact an observer finds the unconscionable delays of every festal dance most provoking. At last all have appeared and taken their places around the fire, while the uninitiated eagerly wait near the door for the invitation which they know will soon be given. One of the com-

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is now sufficiently tamed so that he can lie down and rest, and thenceforth the nocturnal raids on the village are discontinued.

X remains concealed on the platform, supposedly without eating, for four days. On the fourth day occurs the ceremony of washing. Early in the morning a herald goes to every house in the village asking for urine and grease extracted from the heads of sockeye salmon. The *hahaiat* gather in X's house, to which full chamber-vessels and pots of grease have been taken. No uninitiated are allowed to be present, but from adjacent houses they hear sounds of furious struggling, combined with growling. Presently they see a number of *hahaiat* carrying X, smeared with liquid, to the river. Some informants state that he is actually covered with urine and fish-oil, others that these are merely emptied within the house and water poured over X, that their collection is merely to deceive the uninitiated. At any rate he is taken to the river, where, in spite of his shrieks, kicks, and struggles, he is four times doused by his guardians. Often he seizes stones from the bed of the stream and hurls them at his captors, sometimes bruising them severely. This washing assists in the restoration of X to sanity. He is taken four times to every house in the village, no longer growling and struggling, and a herald announces that he will dance that evening.

Soon after dusk the *hahaiat* are summoned and they practise the four songs composed for X. Then the uninitiated are called in. As his songs are sung, X dances in the usual *hahaiat* style, but more violently than most, and growling at intervals. The women drone and his four guardians stand close by, spitting into his ears to soothe him.* This is done by calling *hoip* loudly close to his head, so that a spray of fine saliva is ejected over him. After dancing, X sits down once more and a marshal calls out that food is to be given to him; he is supposed to have eaten nothing but morsels of human flesh since his departure for the upper world. The women are sent

*Spitting also occurs frequently in connection with curing by means of the ceremonial handling of sticks.

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[The Cannibal Dance]

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every since no female can witness a Cannibal's first meal. Three *hahaiat* are dispatched to ask for food, as if they were begging on behalf of X. Olachen grease, dried salmon, dried meat, and other luxuries are always given to them, and the uninitiated women are excited at witnessing this collection of food. Sometimes a request is made during the day, and the messengers are entitled to call upon any individual by name to provide grease or some other delicacy.

[152] The actual feeding is done by a shaman who is also a *haiaiat*. He first dips his hands in the grease, warms them at the fire and rubs them over X's face as the struggling Cannibal is held by six or eight *hahaiat*. Members of the society keep calling out *hoip* to soothe X, who is supposed to be like a wild animal, and to have lost all desire for ordinary food. Like a maniac he snaps at the shaman's fingers, while the *hahaiat* cry out and the uninitiated watch with fear and amazement. After rubbing the Cannibal's cheeks four times, the shaman shouts out that he is almost ready to eat. The heralds echo his words, and go through the village to inform all of what has taken place. The shaman now puts a few morsels of food in a spoon and tries to feed X, who struggles and tries to bite pieces out of the utensil itself. Undiscouraged, he puts small pieces of food actually into X's mouth, headless of the snapping jaws, and at last persuades him to swallow a little.

"He has eaten," the shaman calls out joyfully, and the heralds repeat the good tidings.

An effort is next made to force him to drink, but X only bites the vessel, and the fingers of the shaman, and succeeds in drenching himself with the liquid. But at last he swallows a few mouthfuls.

"He has drunk," calls the shaman, and as before the heralds repeat his words.

The shaman now tells the uninitiated that X will be all right, but that it will be safer for them to depart, as they leave willingly. Heralds keep everyone in the village informed of the events.

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in a flesh-coloured bathing-suit, imitating the nakedness of earlier years. The writer was talking to one of the marshals, a very old man, and remarked how different the present rites must appear to him.

"Yes," replied the old man. "But after all, the change is not so great. In former years we imitated what the supernatural beings did, now we imitate what our fathers did."

Many ethnologists, acquainted with the elaborate rituals carried out on the coast early in this century, have expressed surprise at the rapidity with which these have dwindled to mere shadows. The writer believes that one factor for the Bella Coola decline in ritual, is the realization that the rites are imitative, and that accordingly their significance could not be lost when further imitation is added.

Further research would undoubtedly have added particulars of the manner in which other Cannibals carried out their rites, but to obtain the full details of all would have been detrimental to other types of investigation; it is believed that the above descriptions are typical. Before passing to other dances, a few general remarks on the Cannibal ritual may prove useful.

In view of the arduous character of the dance, and the necessity for impressing the uninitiated with the great power of the Cannibals, the marshals usually prohibit a man from acting unless he is physically strong. Rarely, however, a woman is allowed to be a Cannibal if she has the necessary prerogative, but usually only if she is the last survivor of her family. In such cases the shorter rite is the more common.

As before stated, *Ancient* origin myths are supposed to be remembered, but in practice few *Ancients* know the history of their prerogatives. The process of forgetting has undoubtedly increased in the last few years, but the writer feels confident that they were never maintained with the same care as origin myths connected with the Great people.

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BBA Bellacoola MSS

[The Ghost Dance]

X's, where he is greeted by the four times repeated feminine hooting of sticks and his call returned wherever it came.

During the rest of the ceremonial season X becomes mad at intervals and displays his insanity by rushing to every house and throwing dirt and sand. His *kukwiac* escort is always with him, and the procedure is identical with that already recorded. X makes no recompense for the damage inflicted, so it is probable that his fellows do not regard his dance as an unmitigated pleasure, but nothing can be done to deter him from exercising his prerogative.

THE DANCE OF THE SUPERNATURAL CHARMER

Although the Bella Coola are probably as moral as members of any other tribe, they enjoy humour of an obscene nature, and a dance which never fails to provide amusement is that of the Supernatural Charmer. The patron of this is *Snimcoimuk*, a beautiful, unmarried, feminine being who is also named *Mlqmaks i* and *Nuxalkmaiaix*. She is thought to disregard the efforts of her supernatural relatives to restrain her, and comes to this earth where she bestows her favours not only on human beings, but on animals. Her protégé at Kimsquit is a young man, *Talaiaiks*, at Bella Coola, a young woman, *Kwaldzmc*; like all other *kukwiac* names these can be used either by men or women. It is said that *Talaiaiks*'s prerogative is derived from the appearance of an ancestor in past ages, whereas that of *Kwaldzmc* was initiated three generations ago by a very powerful chief. The ritual in each case is identical, as the dancer can be referred to as X. Each has the prerogative of singing not only of *Snimcoimuk*, but also of the being known as *N'cmaimuk*. Many masks are required at the *nukwum* of either of these beings, so it is customary for X to perform with respect to *Snimcoimuk* one year, and to *N'cmaimuk* at the next or a subsequent ceremonial season, though the actual songs always refer to both patrons.

When X wishes to dance he consults the marshals, obtains their consent, and then makes final arrangements on, normally,

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comes though an infant in arms, though uninitiated, can be brought to dances by its mother; distinctions between rich and poor, slave and freeman, become of slight importance; all that really matters is whether a person is or is not a *dzuiat*. Membership in the society seems to the uninitiated the most desirable thing in life, although their fears are always so strong that they never cease to dread actual admission. The feeling of class consciousness which exists in a somewhat mild form at other seasons of the year, gives place to a powerful sentiment of superiority on the part of members of the society over those who are not so fortunate. Even the respect normally shown to chiefs is submerged since they, too, are subject to the rule of the marshals.

Apart entirely from this attitude of superiority and inferiority, is the bond of fellowship engendered among members of the society by the rites. Whatever happens, the uninitiated must be deceived. Moreover, the psychological effect of gathering nightly in a body for a specific purpose is tremendous. Night after night they eat together; night after night they listen to the words of the marshals, who impress on them the need for co-operation and secrecy, who hold before them the good example set by their fellows who have carried out rites successfully, who emphasize the fact that they are doing as their fathers did. The ceremonial import is of greatest consequence at all these gatherings, but when the uninitiated have withdrawn the *dzuiat* relax somewhat and enjoy themselves. The food itself is always of the best and some of the usual restrictions are removed. It is, for example, the only time that women are allowed to eat the flesh of seals. If this delicacy is provided the marshals enjoy the tidbits, but after Cannibals, novices, and others have received preferential treatment, the remainder is distributed to all and sundry.

It has been stated by some writers, especially those unfamiliar with the significance of native ceremonial life, that the dances of the coastal tribes are orgies of immorality. This point was investigated with care and it may be stated posi-